

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

1. (currently amended) A connector comprising a housing (20) with opposite front and rear ends and at least one cavity extending between the ends for receiving at least one terminal fitting (10) inserted into the cavity along an inserting direction, a retainer mount hole extending transversely into the housing and communicating with the cavity and a retainer (40) mountable to the housing at the retainer mount hole for locking the terminal fitting (10) in the cavity of the housing (20), wherein:

the retainer (40) comprises a main body (41) with at least one locking section (45) for at least partly entering the retainer mount hole along a mounting direction angularly aligned to the inserting direction and for directly locking the terminal fitting (10) when the retainer (40) is mounted at a proper mount position (FIGS. 11-13) with respect to the housing (20), and side plates (42) at opposite lateral ends of the main body (41) for at least partly covering outer surfaces (29) of the housing (20), the side plates having tapered peripheral ends, and

the housing (20) comprises protecting portions (35) for covering spaced outwardly from the outer surfaces of the housing and disposed so that the tapered peripheral ends (42a) of the side plates (42) from outer sides are between the outer surfaces of the housing and the protecting portions when the retainer (40) is mounted at the proper mount position and so that portions of the side plates between the peripheral ends and the main body are exposed.

2. (currently amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein holding means ~~(30; 31; 33; 49; 53)~~ for holding the retainer ~~(40)~~ at the proper mount position are provided on the side plates ~~(42)~~ and the outer surfaces ~~(29)~~ of the housing ~~(20)~~.

3. (currently amended) The connector of claim 2, wherein the holding means ~~(30; 31; 33; 49; 53)~~ comprise holding portions ~~(30; 31; 33)~~ on the outer surfaces ~~(29)~~ of the housing ~~(20)~~ and locks ~~(49; 53)~~ on inner surfaces of the side plates ~~(42)~~ and, the locks being engageable with the holding portions ~~(30; 31; 33)~~.

4. (currently amended) The connector of claim 3, wherein the side plates ~~(42)~~ are resiliently deformable away from the outer surfaces ~~(29)~~ of the housing ~~(20)~~ as the locks ~~(49; 53)~~ move onto the holding portions ~~(30; 31; 33)~~ during mounting and detaching the retainer ~~(40)~~.

5. (currently amended) The ~~A~~ connector of claim 4 comprising:
a housing for receiving at least one terminal fitting, the housing having
outer surfaces and holding portions formed on the outer surfaces;
a retainer mountable to the housing at a proper mount position, the
retainer having a main body with at least one locking section for locking the terminal
fitting when the retainer is at the proper mount position, the retainer further having side
plates at opposite lateral ends of the main body for at least partly covering the outer
surfaces of the housing, locks formed on the side plates and configured for engaging
the holding portions on the outer surfaces of the housing when the retainer is moved to
the proper mount position, the side plates being resiliently deformable away from the
outer surfaces of the housing as the locks move relative to the holding portions during
mounting and detaching the retainer; and

protecting portions projecting from the housing and disposed outwardly from the outer surfaces of the housing so that peripheral ends of the side plates are between the outer surfaces of the housing and the protecting portions, wherein escaping surfaces ~~(36; 55)~~ are provided on at least one of facing surfaces of the protecting portions ~~(35)~~ and the side plates ~~(42)~~ for letting the side plates ~~(42)~~ resiliently deform away from the corresponding outer surfaces ~~(29)~~ of the housing ~~(20)~~.

6. (currently amended) The connector of claim 5, wherein the escaping surfaces ~~(36; 55)~~ are provided on both the facing surfaces of the protecting portions ~~(35)~~ and the side plates ~~(42)~~, and the protecting portions ~~(35)~~ are formed to be substantially flush with outer ends of the side plates ~~(42)~~.

7. (currently amended) The connector of claim 6, wherein the escaping surfaces ~~(36)~~ of the protecting portions ~~(35)~~ and the escaping surfaces of the side plates each are inclined with respect to a mounting direction of the retainer onto the housing, and wherein the escaping surfaces of the protecting portions have a more moderate inclination than the escaping surfaces ~~(55)~~ of the side plates ~~(42)~~.

8. (currently amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein a clearance ~~(54)~~ is defined between the retainer ~~(40)~~ and a portion ~~(27)~~ of the housing ~~(20)~~ when the retainer ~~(40)~~ is ~~position~~ at a position different from the proper mount position, so that an inserted state of the male terminal fitting ~~(40)~~ can be confirmed through this clearance ~~(54)~~ from outside the housing ~~(20)~~.

9. (currently amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein at least one weakened portion ~~(50)~~ is provided in the side plates ~~(42)~~ for making the side plates ~~(42)~~ easier to deform away from outer surfaces ~~(29)~~ of the housing ~~(20)~~.

10. (currently amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein locking means ~~(49; 30; 31)~~ are provided for holding the retainer ~~(40)~~ at a position ~~(FIGS. 7-10)~~ on or in the housing ~~(20)~~ different from the proper mount position.

11. (currently amended) The connector of claim 1, wherein guiding means ~~(49; 30)~~ are provided on the side plates ~~(42)~~ and the outer surfaces ~~(29)~~ of the housing ~~(20)~~ for guiding movement of the retainer ~~(40)~~ with respect to the housing ~~(20)~~.